POLLARD

The League of Nations
An Historical Argument

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A. F. POLLARD

THE CONDITIONS OF THE PROBLEM
THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS ON PAPER
THE LESSON OF HISTORY

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I

The Conditions of the Problem

'I hope we may say', remarked the Prime Minister in announcing the terms of the armistice concluded on 11 November, 'that thus, this fateful morning, came an end to all wars.' It is a larger hope than has probably ever been expressed by a responsible statesman before, and we may well inquire upon what it depends and what grounds for so great a confidence in the permanence of peace a survey of past and present provides for the future. Various answers of various worth will be given by the politician, the lawyer, and the seer, by the dealers in things as they are and the prophets of worlds to be. But there is room in the discussion for those whose profession at least is to learn and to tell how things come to pass in the sphere of human affairs; for the scripture of history has not been written in vain, and we may be quite sure that our dream of a League of Nations will be the baseless fabric of a vision unless it is woven of the threads of human experience upon the loom of past achievement.

War is a congenital disease of mankind, and there has not, since modern States arose, been a comprehensive conflict between them without producing as its reaction some plan for perpetual peace. There is no

need to recapitulate here the schemes fathered on Sully, propounded by the Abbé St. Pierre, Rousseau, and Kant, or enshrined in the Holy Alliance, nor to dwell upon the melancholy fate which befell in turn the varied progeny of these distinguished and diverse parents. We may account for it as we like. We may point out that the modern dogma of the sovereignty of the national State implies an anarchy among them which necessitates occasional if not frequent recourse to the barbarous arbitrament of war. We may explain that the proprietary notion of the State gave its proprietor an irresistible inducement to extend his property whenever he discerned the opportunity, or that economic necessity forces modern democracies into the dilemma of war or starvation. We may say that an increasing divergence of national character and aspirations imposes war upon nations as a struggle for the survival of the fittest, or that the survival of backward peoples with their cult of the duel relegates to a distant future the settlement of disputes involving their honour or vital interests by any other means than the sword and poison-gas. But unless we can show that the tendency of history, in spite of appearances and of many of its professors, is to eliminate or diminish all these causes of conflict, we shall have no sure foundation for the projects of publicists or the treaties of statesmen and lawyers. The way to hell is not more lavishly paved with good intentions than the path of history is strewn with broken treaties and with scraps of paper. For codes and contracts are worthless without the will to maintain them, or the support that is provided by a public opinion which no wizard of political

strategy and no State department of publicity can evoke at will.

It is a maxim of historical science which is well enough understood by this time that no government, be it never so autocratic, can achieve anything except with the help of forces and circumstances which exist independently of that government's will, ambition, or capacity ; and it is idle to blame the rulers of the past for their failure to obtain results which were not obtainable or to turn out finished products without the essential raw materials. Nor is it much more profitable to transfer our censure from the rulers to their peoples. Burke's admission that the people have been frequently and outrageously in the wrong, both in other countries and in this, must be qualified by his confessed ignorance of the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole nation ; and the root of the matter is his remark that governments have no other materials to work upon but those out of which God has been pleased to form the inhabitants of this world. The responsibility of Providence does not exclude that of man, and there are no physical laws which compel men to fight. But the human world was made by its past and not by its present. The age of man is thousands of years ; no one is born free of his environment or inheritance, and no generation is independent of the past. Mankind is a communion of the living and the dead, and the dead are the vast majority whose voice and vote have bound to a large extent the living remnant of to-day.

We come to the mysterious, mystical content of history. We know not what we do. Some have vision, some have power of a limited sort. But the mass is

blind, helplessly reacting to passion, instinct, tradition, economic forces and tides in the affairs of men over which both they and their rulers have a very imperfect control. The tide, when taken at its flood, may lead to fortune or to peace ; but it is the tide, turned and sped by the heaped-up impulse of past and present forces, which bears men on, and only under conditions is man the captain of his soul and the master of his fate. Fatalism, indeed, is not the creed of modern democracy, which is apt at times to think itself the autocrat of the world. But even autocracies have not of late been masters of their fate, and democracies did not willingly make or enter this war. If, indeed, it is true—and it is—that besides this unplumbed content of history there is also a more measurable factor, the growth of human control over human affairs, it is still a control that is confined and conditioned. The eternal iron laws of Goethe's ' psalm of life ' are not so rigid as they were, and even tides can be defied by mechanical science. But the movements of thought and passion are more evasive and intractable, and the freedom of spirits, good or evil, is not to be bound by the simple contrivance of science. The spirit of man goes its way, sometimes to chains and peradventure to self-destruction, by a volition we hardly control ; and even in the moment of victory it is well to remember that he has the sterner task as well as the higher ideal who ruleth his spirit than he who taketh a city.

Quo vadis ? is the crucial question we ask of the spirit of the times, which is a harder spirit to direct than that of any man or nation. ' Towards peace ' is the obvious answer for the moment, and the trend is comprehensive,

marked, and almost violent. But strong feelings are apt to be evanescent, and the strength of the passion for peace evoked by the untold and untellable horrors of this war is no guarantee of its permanence. A surfeit of war has ever produced a longing for peace, but never yet made it lasting ; and every great European conflict has closed with schemes for avoiding the wars which the next generation has waged. Fleeting are the moods of men, and the intermittence of the fever of war is no proof of the permanent sanity of mankind. We need something more than the word of the devil when sick or the blenching of the yellow press to convince us of the reality of their conversion or of the imminence of the rule of reason and of the brotherhood of man ; and it needs something more than the journalistic eye to discern between the mood of to-day and those of 1713 or 1815 a difference substantial enough to erect thereon a faith in the stability of peace.

Fortunately there are other factors in history than the sentiments and variable wills of men. There is a progress in spite of the cant which obscures it ; and that progress, despite this war, has been and is towards the unity of the world. But for that conviction the plans for a League of Nations would not to the historian be worth the paper on which they are written, and all our eloquence would be waste of breath. The war may seem a standing refutation of this growth of unity. But at its beginning I ventured to suggest that its essential character was a civil war ; and civil wars are the growing-pains of unity. They are disputes over the articles of association, and men do not wage them until they have consciously or unconsciously agreed to be

bound together. Yorkist and Lancastrian fought the Wars of the Roses because they were agreed that there could only be one England. One party wished that unity to be Yorkist, the other Lancastrian; but both were equally convinced that there could not be two Englands, one Lancastrian and the other Yorkist. So the French fought their wars of religion because they could not tolerate the idea of a Catholic and a Huguenot France; and we fought our civil wars in the seventeenth century because there could be only one England, and some of us wanted it to be Roundhead and others Cavalier.

The United States provides an even better analogy. Their civil war of 1861–5 is often taken as showing their disruptive tendency. It was nothing of the sort; it was a proof of their growing unity. Hitherto there had been room in the loose confederation for practically two polities—one of them slave-owning, the other dedicate to freedom; one of them holding one view of national unity, the other an incompatible view of the constitution. By 1861 they had grown too much together for such diversities. There was no longer room for two contradictory ideals; the United States were becoming too much one to speak to the world with discordant voices on fundamental principles; and North and South fought one another to decide the political complexion of the single unit. Before the civil war the United States was a plural noun; now it is singular in its unity. They have disappeared, but it—it may even be she—has come into existence.

Having demonstrated that growth of unity to the world, the United States has proceeded to demonstrate

a greater. Nearly a century ago President Monroe laid down his famous doctrine of two worlds, the New devoted to democracy, the Old abandoned to the autocrats; and for a hundred years more or less that schismatic doctrine held the field. The Old World might go its own way, the New would certainly go its; Europe was not to interfere with America, and America would hold aloof from Europe. But the unconscious trend of human affairs was too strong for the counsels of George Washington or the doctrine of Monroe, too strong even for the instincts and traditions of the great republic. The world was becoming one, despite all efforts to prevent it. Space was shrinking, markets were expanding, and the infection of human thought defied all artificial frontiers. There was not room in the world for two, one old and the other new. Human nerves encircled the globe like cables and wireless telegraphy. A disturbance in any part disturbed the whole; wheat-rings in Chicago produced famine and riots in Milan; a shock to confidence in Petrograd sent down securities in New York; and the plague of militarism spread its noxious influence to the Pacific. Democracy was not safe in any quarter while autocracy threatened it elsewhere; and neutrality could not be maintained with self-respect and independence in America while war shook Europe to its foundations. There was no more room in the world for Prussian ideals and our own in 1914 than there was for a North and a South in the United States of 1861, or for a Lancastrian and a Yorkist England in the fifteenth century. The world had become one society; its articles of association and

principles of government were in dispute. They could only be settled by civil war ; and the end of that war, with its holocaust of autocrats, has sealed and signed the oneness of the world. The secular atonement has been made, and we have been baptized by the blood of its victims into one communion of democratic faith.

The world has thus become one in the sense that there is no longer room in it for certain divergences. Politically as well as physically it has to revolve in the same direction on the same axis ; one half of it cannot continue to pull in a democratic direction while the other half pulls in that of autocracy, any more than one hemisphere can turn from west to east and the other from east to west. We can no longer have some nations ingeminating peace while others are bent upon war, some pursuing imperial domination and others developing national liberty. Thus far we have gone along the path of unity ; but that unity is not complete and never will be until the world declines to the monotony of death. We have decided that nationality shall be the basis of States, and States the expression of nationality. But we have not decided—indeed we have expressly repudiated the notion—that nationality shall be either uniform or subject to a uniform authority. Many have talked of internationalism and some of a super-State embracing the world ; but internationalism implies nationalism, and it is an inter-State rather than a super-State that we need, something not to suppress the State or the nationalism by which it lives, but to deal with their relations and safeguard the principles upon which the war has decided that those relations shall be conducted. We have not made

war for scraps of paper in order to abolish the possibility of international contracts, nor championed the rights of little nations in order to sink them in a super-State. The decision that nation shall not make war upon nation does not imply their common and comprehensive suicide, and the insistence upon the arbitrament of right does not mean the suppression of parties to the arbitration. The unity of the world is not a unity of government, but one of ideas as to how nations shall regulate their relations with one another. We did not abolish the individual when we instituted the State, and we shall not abolish the national State when we set up a League of Nations.

We may have to abolish a dogma—not one, indeed, of German origin, but one of German adoption, extension, and logical application—and that dogma is the superstition of the State, the creed that, in Treitschke's words, the State has the right to merge into one the nationalities in its power; that it is an end in itself which justifies every means; that it has, indeed, every right because the State is might and, to quote Bernhardi, what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war. This apotheosis of the State is the German idolatry which demanded its millions of victims and turned Europe into a shambles. With Moloch there can be no terms, and to plead for compromise is like advocating moderation in murder and temperance in observing the Ten Commandments. But we need not revert to the old dispensation which confused the destruction of sin with the killing of sinners: we do not seek to destroy mankind in order to make it moral; and it is not the State but its idolatry that we wish to extirpate.

The war has, indeed, been one waged against a subtler and more pervading autocracy than is commonly understood. Popularly autocracy has meant the Kaiser, and people have not been much concerned to reconcile this conception with the democratic suffrage for the Reichstag or their own conviction that the Germans as a whole were hardly less responsible than their rulers for the war and its brutalities. The autocracy of individuals is in fact something of a myth, and the real enemy to civilization, as it is also the real parent of militarism, is the autocracy of the State, which is not confined to the Central Empires and their allies. That is also the truth about irresponsibility. The irresponsibility of monarchs to their peoples is a matter of detail compared with the irresponsibility of the State. If the State can do what it likes, frame its own code of international conduct, and dictate its own conceptions of truth and morals, it is immaterial to those who suffer whether that dictation comes from a despot or a democracy. Belgium and northern France would be equally in ruins had German invasion been sped by a popular Minister; and it is not self-evident that the flag of social revolution is less 'red in tooth and claw' than the eagles emblazoned on the standards of ancient or modern empires. 'You must begin', says General Smuts, 'with the hearts of men;' but the hearts of men are encased in a hard and explosive shell when they are wrapped up in the selfish and arrogant form of a State that is responsible only to itself and responsive only to the pride and passions of its own component population. We need, in President Wilson's words, a community of power,

but we need a community of conscience, too ; and we shall not get either so long as individual States or classes claim to be the self-sufficient judges of their own virtue and the autocratic arbiters of their own claims.

We are conscious now of our own pacific and righteous conduct, and for the moment our determination to make an end of all wars is sincere enough. But sincerity may be very impressive and even very profound without being very lasting, and time alone can show whether we have the root of the matter in us. The horrors of war, which millions of British casualties, air-raids, poison-gas, and the submarine have brought home to us, evoked but a pallid sentiment so long as we were merely engaged in slaughtering naked Matabele with machine-guns or laying waste the distant homesteads of South Africa. Machine-guns may be more humane than poison-gas, but the distinction might seem rather fine to primitive tribes who were defenceless against them both and were not parties to Hague Conventions which countenanced one but not the other. Devilry largely consists in methods with which we have not provided ourselves ; but it was not a German chemist to whom the idea first occurred of using poison-gas as an instrument of war. Nor did the Germans invent the submarine, and we can hardly expect peoples who have no sea-board to be much more sensitive to the enormity of sinking unarmed ships than we were to the use of artillery against natives armed with assegais. Horror of war from which we suffer has not quite the same moral quality as horror of war on principle or of war which

tortures other people. Even regard for scraps of paper is not quite an unbroken attachment on the part of ourselves or our American allies to whose support we mainly look for a League of Nations. 'Damn the treaty' was a not unpopular attitude in the United States towards the Clayton-Bulwer compact over the Panama Canal; and a broken treaty has played a large part in the history of the estrangement between the British and Irish peoples. The need of others' assistance in this war, coupled with the perversity of German patriotism, has convinced us for the time that patriotism is not enough to redeem the world; but not long ago another British war, not unconnected with scraps of paper, provoked even Nonconformist divines into publicly avowing the principle of 'my country, right or wrong', and that, too, was a phrase borrowed from a trans-Atlantic democrat.

No nation can claim exemption from responsibility for the conditions which made this war and its calamities possible; for all had made war themselves and countenanced it, even by international law and agreements, as a legitimate method of procedure. They had merely failed to foresee its magnitude, its brutality, and the comprehensive sweep of its disastrous effects; and it needed this war with its universal disturbance and suffering to give us a common will to peace, a common hatred of militarism, and a common impulse towards civilization. That sentiment would, if it stood alone, be as transient as similar manifestations in the past. But reason and forces we do not control may help to make it permanent. Conditions which tended to make wars tolerable in the past have been destroyed,

and delusions which fostered the notion that war might be made more tolerable in the future have been dissipated. Mediaeval campaigns were often little more than the summer excursions of feudal barons and their retainers, and forty days a year was the limit of a compulsory service restricted to those who held their lands on those terms. Universal national service was an invention of revolutionary nationalism, and the prolongation of wars was an effect of the modern State with its growing control of ways and means. Nevertheless, since Napoleon's time, the increasing intensity of wars seemed to be compensated by their brevity, and no European war since 1815 lasted a couple of years. But the idea that future wars will necessarily be short is not likely to survive our experience of a war which, but for the intervention of the United States, might have continued, with intervals for recuperation, indefinitely.

Nor have other limitations proved more effective. Aircraft and the range of Berthas have extended beyond all previous conception the sphere of military operations, and the next great war might see not an acre of the earth's surface beyond the reach of destruction. The distinction between combatants and non-combatants has been eliminated not only by the almost universal adoption of compulsory military service or by the sweeping of millions of women into the manufacture of munitions, but by the treatment of civilians in occupied territories and the impossibility of distinguishing between the victims of a torpedo, an aircraft bomb, or a long-range gun. It is idle to expect a shell fired eighty miles away to spare women, children, or churches,

and the most optimistic of international lawyers never proposed to limit the range of guns. International law has proved a mockery as a palliative of war. There have, indeed, been precepts observed even during this war, and prisoners have not often been massacred as they were by Henry V. But that was because they were too useful, and their labour alone enabled the Germans to maintain the struggle so long. Other maxims of humanity have also been regarded, not because they were humane or enjoined by international law, but simply because their breach would not have tended towards the efficient conduct of war. We cannot count in the future upon any observance in war which militates against success. *Leges inter arma silent* not merely because law and war are incompatible terms, but because the modern triumph of positive law over the older conceptions of a divine or natural law, which could not be altered, enables the victor to make what law he likes. The victor has ever written the history man believes, and he will ever make the law which man will obey.

One cherished child of international law is passing without regret, the privilege of neutrality; and the favour with which it regarded its offspring was one cause of the moral weakness of international law. Wars were, perhaps naturally, in the eyes of the law disreputable squabbles. Decent folk would hold aloof and deserved every sort of protection. To discriminate between the guilt of the belligerents was considered by international jurisprudence as impossible as primitive jurisprudence held it to try the thought of man. The ordeal or trial by battle might reveal the truth, but

jurisprudence washed its hands and retired from the judgement seat with the reflection that it was probably a case of six on one side and half a dozen on the other. International law has been almost as primitive; it regarded neutrality as a virtuous attitude, and thought that belligerents, whether right or wrong, must be treated with impartiality. It was as culpable or as legitimate to help the one as the other; but neutrals must be as free to assist the big as the little, the criminal as his victim. Not the least of the items to be set to the credit account of this war has been that the path of neutrality has not been made smooth, and that all neutrals who were not prevented by fear or private perversity have been compelled to abandon this anti-social aloofness. Even those who have persisted have found the lot of neutrality unhappy enough to set little store on it for the future. All exemptions from the effects of war have in fact been abolished; and the war has completed that community of mankind which tolerates no immunity and binds all the nations of the world to a common interest in the administration of justice and the maintenance of peace. That is a fundamental point in the new dispensation, and unless we grasp it firmly and clear our minds of the old there will be no League of Nations and no peace for the world. The more we foster and favour neutrality the more we abjure our conscience, shirk our public duty, shield the criminal from justice, encourage aggression, and perpetuate the risk of war. Neutrality is indifference to international justice, and the subtlest because the most cowardly enemy of mankind.

The issues of war and peace have thus ceased to be

the private affairs of individual disputants and become the common concern of the world. No mere sentimental revulsion from war impels the community to act; and this impulse is the novel condition, imposed upon the world by unconscious forces, which differentiates the present from the past and refutes the argument from the failure of earlier efforts to establish a League of Nations. Not that the temporary confederation of Europe effected a century ago by the common need to restrain Napoleon was entirely in vain; but it had three fatal defects. It was based upon legitimist reaction, it excluded America, and it transgressed the proper functions of a League of Nations by interfering with domestic government. It is to be hoped that a future League of Nations will avoid these errors, and that in spite of obvious temptations we shall not impose order on Russia by means of foreign bayonets. Bolshevism is doubtless a monstrous tyranny, but at least it is a native product, and nations only learn wisdom by their own experience. If the Bolsheviks are a majority there is no case for intervention; if they are not, the majority has only its own divisions and lack of courage to thank for the plight in which it is placed. For aught we know China may soon be in much the same situation, and our League of Nations will go the way of the Holy Alliance if it sets out to give independent peoples the kind of government we think they ought to enjoy. We need a community of power, but not for the purpose of establishing uniformity.

Any idea, however, of a community of power cuts straight across our traditional allegiance to the theory or at least the phrase of a Balance of Power. But it is

not clear what that theory is nor whether it is anything more than a phrase ; and a brief examination will show that just as many of us remain attached to a brand of tobacco or tea, a newspaper or a shibboleth, while it retains its name but long after it has lost its original flavour and savour, so we remain in bondage to the Balance of Power after it has lost its meaning and usefulness to the world. To Castlereagh, for instance, a balance of power meant ' a just repartition [after Napoleon's fall] of force amongst the States of Europe ', a sort of rationing of power by agreement. The idea was that, given a number of independent States with a reasonable amount of power, the inordinate growth of any one would automatically produce a combination of the others to keep it within bounds. There was to be no balance between the ambitious unit and the rest, but a decisive preponderance against it on the part of the community ; and the balance was not to be an equipoise between two opposing forces, but an equilibrium maintained by a proportionate distribution of weights throughout the European body politic. The last century has seen the destruction of this distribution by the collection of practically all the weights in two opposing scales. It was not a process of disintegration, but of integration into two great systems of alliance, in much the same way as local factions and baronial families amalgamated into the Yorkist and Lancastrian parties in the fifteenth century ; and that produced the Wars of the Roses just as this amalgamation of European States into the Triple Alliance and the Entente provoked the race for armaments and this war. The cult of the Balance of Power continued, however,

in spite of the change which made the new equilibrium a menace to peace rather than a protection from war. For while a just distribution of power among a number of States is a guarantee against aggression by one, nothing is more unstable than an equipoise between two opposing alliances. The least disturbance will upset it, and the fear which that danger provoked gave rise to the keen competition in armaments and diplomatic preparations for war.

Nor was our British devotion to the Balance of Power so single-minded as we pretended. We made reservations which destroyed its value as an ideal of international politics. It was solely to Europe that we wished to apply the doctrine ; and we wanted a balance of power in Europe because the more nearly Europe was balanced the freer would be our hands elsewhere. We desired no balance of power on the sea, nor even a ' repartition of force ' in Castlereagh's sense. Nor did we want a balance of power in Africa, America, or Asia. Our professed devotion to the doctrine of balance of power was combined with a pretty stiff determination to maintain our own monopoly or supremacy wherever we possessed it ; and we cannot expect a League of Nations to turn quite the same blind eye to the problem in every sphere but one. If we adhere to the theory of a Balance of Power, we must be prepared for its general application and submit to the terms of our own prescription. The world will not be content to base its peace upon our own persuasion of the unqualified reasonableness with which we shall use a monopoly of power ; and if the peace of the world is to depend upon a balance of power, power will have to be balanced all

the world over and not merely in Europe. Nor, indeed, is it quite easy even in Europe to reconcile the idea of a balance of power with the destruction of German militarism; it was only the so-called pacifists who wanted the war to end in something like a balance of power, and the objection of most of us to such a termination was that it meant, not peace, but the permanent threat of war.

The Balance of Power is in fact not less futile, illogical, and antiquated as a means of peace than was the balance between Yorkists and Lancastrians, Roundheads and Cavaliers. Terms had to be made in the end between the opposing forces, and peace to be based upon a common authority providing for the common observance of those terms. That is why we need a League of Nations and what we require from it. The balance must end in a community of power, and compensation for the restraint of the individual licence of nations be found in their ordered liberty. Here again we are slaves to words and phrases, and in our worship of national sovereignty tremble at the thought of limiting international licence. As if there were any liberty when every one did as he liked, or any tyranny half so arbitrary, so irresponsible, or so incalculable as anarchy. What has national sovereignty been worth to Belgium or Serbia? What are the personal liberties we owe to the absence of international order? Is conscription freedom, or 'Dora' a proof of liberty? Are millions of casualties and thousands of millions of national debt things we would not have avoided if we could? Is it of our own choice that we have spent enough on war to have financed all the social, political,

and educational reforms it ever entered the heart of man to conceive? Does freedom consist in the fear which drove French democracy into the arms of autocratic Russia and constrained the Republic to furnish the Tsardom with the financial means which enabled Russian bureaucracy to withstand reform until revolution threatened with ruin alike the cause of the Russian people and that of the French? Was it self-determination which counselled us also to countenance that corrupt régime by an alliance, or forced Italy into the Teutonic fold to the distraction of her external aspirations and the debasement of her internal politics? What was it but fear which compelled empires to deny justice to subject nationalities, fear lest if free they should become the tools of foreign aggression? What but fear put arms into the hands and arguments into the mouth of militarism, stifled the voice of public opinion and conscience, and impeded the path of reform? There is no freedom where there is fear, and the nations of Europe before 1914 were about as free as a man with the sword of Damocles over his head. We were in bondage to international anarchy, to the superstition of the State, and the fraud of a Balance of Power.

Only a League of Nations will free us from that fear, give us liberty from our bonds. Only if we are liberated from the dread of war and released from apprenticeship to the trades of destruction shall we be free to follow our natural affinities in foreign politics, our obvious call to construction and reconstruction, our duties to our neighbours and ourselves. That may seem an ideal, and there are those who tell us that our vision of peace

is a mere anodyne to the horrors of war, a mirage in the desert, a heaven invented to console us for our present ills. We cannot say for certain; but it rests with us to realize our dream, to create the substance to follow the shadow, and to make out of that which is the world which is to be. We need not to-day be ashamed of the ideal. We have had and seen our professors and practitioners of *realpolitik*; and when we consider the state to which, with their gospel of efficiency and their absence of illusions, they have reduced their spiritual home, we may take courage from the wreckage and come with boldness to the task of building our future on firmer foundations than the sandy soil of the Prussian State.

II

The League of Nations on Paper

The major premiss in every sound argument for reform must always be found in the historical causes of present conditions; and the first lesson of history with regard to the existing situation is that the nations of the world have been and are being compelled to live together in one community, more closely compact and more subtly bound than ever before. The cosmopolitanism of science and economics, of thought and of trade, the annihilation of space and the breaking of the bonds of ignorance which made men strangers to mankind, have put an end beyond the peradventure of recall to that severance upon which nations built their own concerns, their national politics and policies, in happy or unhappy indifference to the affairs of fellow men.

Internationalism is not now a dream or an ideal, it is a sober fact if not a dire necessity ; and the nature of international relations is a problem of more vital and direct concern to every people than any question of domestic politics. What we shall do, what we can do at home, will depend henceforth less upon ourselves than upon our standing and our conversation in the society of the world.

But while the tide of human affairs has thus swept us towards an international goal, the irresistible nature of such movements limits our freedom of action ; and the minor premiss of our argument consists inevitably of a warning against the idea that we can steer to what future we like, without much reference to the shoals and eddies that beset our course or to the conditions of wind and weather that determine our rate of progress. We cannot construct a League of Nations out of sentiment, rhetoric, or pure reason ; for men are not permanently affected by the first two forces, and but partially by the third. Nor are human associations produced by mechanical contrivance. They are matters of custom and habit modified by extraneous forces, and to some extent by conscious intellectual effort. But severe limitations are imposed upon the architects of human institutions and the engineers of human societies. Organization can do much, but it is dependent on the strength of its materials, and the more perfect the organization of man to bear a burden beyond his strength, the more complete is the final collapse. A League of Nations will break down as soon as it goes beyond the point to which public opinion is prepared to support it, and public opinion is the out-

come of a progress determined by causes we cannot control.

These limitations to human volition are often called laws. To the theologian they appear as the laws of God, to the biologist as the laws of Nature, to the politician as the laws of progress. We do not regard them now as being stereotyped after the fashion of those who believed in an act of creation which fixed for all time the conditions of human growth ; and no small content of history is the increasing control of man over the forces of circumstance, heredity, and tradition. It is not true, for instance, that human nature is unalterable, and history records abundant evidence of its alteration. Man is, indeed, hedged about by physical conditions ; he cannot alter the stars in their courses nor amend the constitution of the universe. He has to make the earth and its fullness suffice for his needs and ambitions, and his harvest depends upon more than the seed he has sown or his labour in ploughing and reaping. But there is nothing in human nature or the laws of physics that compels men to fight one another ; if they do, the fault lies not in their stars but in themselves, and the remedy, too, is in their hands.

That view is contested by a school of pseudo-naturalistic economists, whose boasted freedom from illusions drives them to the conclusion that nations are impaled on the horns of the dilemma of ' fight or starve '.[1] According to this despairing theory there is not sufficient land upon the earth to feed its population or at least to satisfy the greed of its imperialists ; and imperialism is represented as the political effect of an

[1] Cf. Walter E. Weyl, *American World Policies*, 1917.

economic necessity arising out of the alleged facts that white peoples cannot subsist on the produce of their mother countries, that they need other lands for exploitation, that trade follows the flag and is only secure where dominion ensures a market. Hence a cut-throat competition, sped by the fear of starvation and decided by force of arms. It is an economic theory as purblind and shallow as the history which discerns in the wars of mankind no more than a vicious circle leading to nothing but repetition. Our increase of trade with the United States after their achievement of independence, and the prosperity of Denmark, Holland, and Belgium, with populations denser than those of Great Britain, Germany, or the United States, should be a sufficient refutation of this theory, which was made or at least adopted in Germany in order to support her plans for expansion. But this war has furnished a more complete and conclusive exposure of its assumptions.

In the first place, the antithesis between war and starvation is false ; for it is war that has wrought what starvation there has been these last four years. Secondly, the war has shown that the earth produces enough to feed mankind in spite of the colossal efforts of man to prevent it. For four years the best and the ablest part of the human race has been diverted from production to destruction. Not only has infinite labour been withdrawn from feeding the world ; it has also been devoted to destroying what was produced. Millions of tons of food have been sunk, millions of tons have been left to rot for lack of transport. And yet mankind has not starved. Millions, indeed, have gone short, but other millions have fed on a scale unknown

and uncalled for in times of peace. So far from the earth and its fullness being insufficient for man, it is probable that, relieved from the destruction of war and its interruption of commerce, the labour of half mankind could feed the whole population. So far at least as we are concerned—and Great Britain could before the war feed itself less than any other nation—it has been shown that insufficiency was not due to the poverty or the narrow extent of our soil, but to the free trade and social conditions which diverted energies to more profitable occupations and the land to less economic uses. From whatever point of view we consider the problem of war and hunger, the moral is that war produces and peace prevents starvation. Neither war nor peace, it is true, solves the problems created by greed, and peace may here perhaps borrow a hint provided by war. If greed be the cause of imperialism, and imperialism of war, the lesson is not to submit to starvation or fight, but to ration the greed or the need which would otherwise drive the greedy or needy nations to war. The demand to be rid of 'Dora' should not induce us to scrap all the lessons the war has taught us or the means we have learnt of dealing with hoarders and profiteers.

No doubt there are predatory instincts in the human breast which grow with the power to indulge them ; but instincts which dominate brutes are controlled by human minds, and the 'laws of nature' are not those of civilization. That does not mean that we can alter human nature or economic and social conditions in a moment. There may not be laws condemning mankind to stagnation, but there are conditions which limit the pace of reform. Nature is not unalterable, but *natura*

nihil facit per saltum ; and the old Latin maxim applies with equal force to modern politics. The rate of progress is not of course uniform ; vaster strides are often taken in one year than in another generation. But in spite of the unhistorical faith in social manufacture which characterizes both Prussianism and Bolshevism, the sounder and more lasting progress of mankind is orderly and gradual because it accommodates itself to conditions which cannot be changed by a *coup d'état* or at the bidding of a bayonet. It was said of the Emperor Joseph II, who brought all his dominions into turmoil by his haste in reformation, that he was always wanting to take his second step before he had taken his first. He was a doctrinaire who derived his politics by deduction from abstract principles rather than by induction from a study of circumstance ; and it behoves us to beware of similar risks in our schemes for a League of Nations.

It would be a thankless and indeed an impossible task to attempt within the limits of this brochure a description or even an analysis of the thirty-seven different schemes which have been propounded for a League of Nations or the pacific settlement of international disputes. Even the six main categories, to which with a little violence they may be reduced, would require a volume to describe them in detail ; and my purpose is not so much to describe the details as to examine the grounds and assumptions upon which these schemes are, almost without exception, based. They are the product of much ingenuity, juristic skill, and moral fervour ; but to the historian at least they seem to betray an inadequate sense of the conditions

and limitations of historical development. As he peruses their manifold clauses and their complicated provisions, he is inevitably reminded of the fertile ingenuity with which the Abbé Sieyès produced a different but always symmetrical constitution for each of the rapidly succeeding phases of the first French Revolution; of the way in which, according to Prince von Bülow, metaphysical members of the Reichstag deduced the most finicking proposals from their *weltanschauung*; and of the need of bearing in mind the importance of Aristotle's distinction between the constitution that is best in the abstract and that which is best under actual circumstances. Politics are not an exact nor a speculative science; they are an art in which postulates and formulae are out of place; and without an historical basis they have no ground on which to rest. The past experience and the present conditions of mankind are the only criteria of political programmes.

Practically all the proposals have certain broad features in common which may be briefly summarized. They provide for, firstly, machinery for settling international disputes either by means of a tribunal like that of The Hague or a council of conciliation. To the first are assigned what are called justiciable disputes, that is to say, disputes which turn on different interpretations of fact or of international law; for the second are reserved those non-justiciable disputes, which affect the honour or vital interests of the parties and cannot presumably be settled by any existing law. Secondly, they contemplate the creation of an international legislature to make fresh international law in order to fill up existing gaps and provide for

an increasing sphere of international judicature. Thirdly, they propose the establishment of an international executive with an international army and navy to give effect to international decisions. There are, of course, infinite varieties in the various schemes, but these broad outlines provide more than enough material for criticism in the space at my disposal.

The first and most general criticism is that all these proposals imply the existence of an international super-State including and transcending the national State. For judicature, legislature, and executive have no existence by themselves: they are the organs or functions of the body politic, expressions and effects of the State, just as the heart and brain are organs, and action and thought are expressions of the natural body. To attempt to create a judicature, a legislature, or an executive without a State is like putting artificial limbs together without a natural body to give them life. Judicial, legislative, and executive institutions do not move of themselves, but are moved by impulse from the heart and brain of the community; and they have been slowly developed as means of giving effect to a pre-existing will. Without the national State, deeply rooted in the past, evolved through ages of growth, expressing profound feelings of peoples trained in the habit of common obedience, these organs of government would merely be mechanism without a driving, controlling, or directing force. Men, says Burke, are not primarily governed by force, still less by violence; they are governed by habit. But where is the habit and the tradition, the common sentiment and will to ensure the smooth working of

international institutions overriding national bias, ambition, and inherited animosities? It is true that on rare occasions separate States have formed themselves or been formed into a super-State with common institutions: thirteen American colonies constructed the United States of America after the War of Independence, and thirty-nine German States were cast into the Germanic Confederation of 1815. But in both of these instances the framers of constitutions could build on a common tongue and a common nationality, a common law and common methods of thought. There is no such common ground for a federation of the world. Nor were these two federations completely successful; the American was followed by a civil war ten times more sanguinary than that of the War of Independence; and the German was followed by several civil wars ending in disruption. The forcing of nations into a super-State might have no other effect than the conversion of national into civil wars. We cannot manufacture anything but an artificial unity, and artificial unity sooner or later breaks down under the strain of natural forces. A super-State created by contract would be an artificial unity perpetually menaced by the natural forces of nationality.

No less pertinent objections can be brought against the individual propositions. We have had experience of the Hague Tribunal, and this war was not prevented by its utter inefficiency. Nor would any better-constructed tribunal be more effective as a means of averting war, if its jurisdiction were limited to justiciable disputes; for neither Germany nor any other State has gone to war in modern times over what it

regarded as a justiciable dispute. Honour or vital interest was always the cause alleged to remove the issue from the category of justiciable disputes and justify recourse to war. Justiciable disputes were in practice always settled by negotiation, conference, or arbitration. It is, indeed, for this reason that we have the proposals for a council of conciliation; but what if the parties or one of them refuse to be conciliated? That, again, was the case in 1914: Germany refused conciliation. And if nations refuse to submit to arbitration or jurisdiction in particular cases, are they likely to bind themselves beforehand to respect the authority of an international legislature designed to make submission a rule of law?

There must in these schemes be a sanction somewhere, a sanction not merely in the form of international arms to give effect to international decisions, but in the higher form of a supreme authority to determine when and where and how that effect shall be given and to co-ordinate force and judgement. Judgements do not execute themselves: 'Mr. Marshall', said a President of the United States with regard to a decision of that famous Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, 'has issued his mandamus; let him execute it if he can.' Armies do not act upon judicial decisions, nor upon their own motion. They await the command of a higher authority except in militarist countries; and that authority is vested in a cabinet responsible to a popularly-elected representative body. For such a body, not merely to legislate but to control an international cabinet, I see no provision, and no possibility of provision, in any of these elaborate projects.

I see in them only provision for a congress or conference of governmental delegates something like the *Bundesrath* which muzzled and controlled the popularly-elected German *Reichstag*. We have here the *disjecta membra* of an international State without the means of unity. Assuming the decisions of an international legislature and an international judicature, there is nothing to guarantee that the armies will march or the navies sail in unison to give effect to their legislation and judgements.

But how are we going to get from these international bodies decisions sufficiently binding and authoritative to eliminate war? How are they going to vote? Will unanimity be required, or will a bare majority suffice? And what security will there be that the forces of the dissentient States will co-operate in giving effect to the views of the majority? The Hague produced what little co-operation it did by limiting its effectiveness to non-essential matters, and by making action conditional upon unanimity. There was the sort of *liberum veto* on the part of each participant which ruined the old constitution of Poland; and the principal value it had was that the acceptance of the requirement of unanimity avoided the insoluble difficulty of determining the voting strength of the respective States. We did not mind giving an equal vote to Uruguay and Nicaragua on questions of sea-power, so long as our individual veto was sufficient to prevent the adoption of measures of which we disapproved. But the condition of unanimity is fatal to effective action in ninety-nine out of a hundred cases; it would, for instance, even excluding the two original disputants,

have prevented a pacific settlement by international authority of the Austro-Serbian dispute in 1914. For Germany, Bulgaria, Turkey, and probably other States would have supported the Austrian contention.

If then we adopt a majority as sufficient for a decision, we are faced with the problem of rationing the votes. 'One man, one vote' may be all very well in a democratic community where men are supposed to be equal, and can at any rate be formed into constituencies of approximate equality; but it needs a very determined democrat to maintain that all States are equal. There are about fifty-seven independent States in the world, varying not merely in civilization but in population from under a million to over a hundred million inhabitants. If each State is to have an equal vote, it means that the citizen—civilized or half-civilized—of the smallest will have a hundred times the voting strength of the citizen of the largest, in determining the world's affairs. The smaller States, by voting together, might give the control over international judicature and legislation to a mere fraction of the human race. Can we then ration the voting power, and adopt the principle of 'one vote, one value'? But on what principle shall we determine value? On that of population? In that case China might outvote Europe, and Asia the rest of the world. And what sort of execution is likely to follow when the executive force of the dissentient minority might exceed by a hundredfold the executive force of the majority whose votes would be in theory binding?

Such are some of the problems of international

institutions conceived of doctrine and born of paper. No doubt we should soon descend from the heights of vision to more practicable ground, and abandon our abstract theories of equality in favour of some more rational distribution. But a League of Nations that had to surmount the initial difficulty of determining the respective values of its members' voting power would not be quick in getting to work nor secure in the allegiance of the greater number of States which would inevitably be dissatisfied with their respective shares. We need not, however, be unduly concerned at the voting strength of a Chinese population or a sovereign State like Nicaragua, if we cut ourselves free from theory and from dogma. The peace of the world will not be seriously disturbed if the chief states of Europe, the United States of America, and Japan can agree to keep it among themselves and discountenance war in other quarters ; and those States have suffered enough from the war to guarantee a readiness to make the sacrifices of *amour propre* and self-determination required to overcome the obstacles in the way of a reasonable system of prevention. But there are one or two ingredients in the future organization of peace which are agitating the most important belligerents and demand a fuller consideration. I refer to the proposal to establish an international force under international control, and the so-called Freedom of the Sea.

Two or three months ago there appeared an article in an important review in which it was stated that the French Commission on the League of Nations had ' turned down ' the idea of an international force, and had thus ' knocked the bottom out of ' the League of

Nations. The statement of fact was very much the reverse of the truth, and the deduction from it was equally wide of the mark. If that proposal has been 'turned down' at all, it has not been by the French Commission, and a League of Nations is not in the least dependent upon an international force, *i. e.* a force distinct from the national forces of the States which are members of the League. The assumed dependence rests upon both a faulty conception of the basis of such a League and an exaggerated conception of the possibilities and usefulness of an international force. We are familiar with examples of the use of an independent international force; the Boxer expedition was one, the gendarmerie in Persia was another. Both these forces were created *ad hoc* for a particular purpose in a particular country. But the international force of a League of Nations must be a standing force prepared to operate wherever the peace of the world is broken or even threatened. Now, it is quite obvious that this force, if distributed in detachments all over the world wherever war may possibly break out, must either be colossal in its total sum or ineffective for its purpose. The schemes, which I have seen or heard of, are based on no such plan. They make the assumption, so erroneous and yet so universal in human anticipations, that we shall next be threatened precisely where and by whom we were threatened last. With Germany in our minds and on our brain, we find it hard to avoid the assumption that the peace of the world will best be preserved by an international army stationed along the Rhine, maintained at the common expense but controlled by the genius of Marshal Foch, and absolutely securing

Belgium, Alsace-Lorraine, and incidentally the Channel Ports from the devastation and dangers of the last four years. That prospect has its obvious attractions to those of us who live in Western Europe, both in the way of saving our national purses and promoting our national safety at the cost of the world at large ; and there is no need to explore any further the conscious or unconscious motives which underlie the scheme.

But supposing the next threat to the peace of the world comes, not from Germany, but from a reconstituted and reactionary Russia, or from an organized Chinese Empire ? Supposing war breaks out between Russia and Japan, between Russia and ourselves on the Indian frontier, or that the peace of the world is threatened by a war between South American States ? Of what use would an international force in Belgium or Alsace-Lorraine be then ? And what prospect is there of inducing Japan or the United States to support financially, forcibly, and morally an international army which guarantees the peace of other people, but is useless for securing it on their own borders or even in their own continents ? The plan is the offspring of a self-concentration, a narrowness of outlook, and a lack of imagination inconsistent with the broad foundations on which alone a League of Nations can rest. Its military force must consist of the sum total of its national forces, and the national force of the country attacked must be the advance-guard of other national forces pledged to its assistance. That alone will give the League a standing force wherever the outbreak may occur. It may seem an inadequate protection for little States like Belgium ; but Belgium would never have

been invaded had it been certain that not merely a British army of two million men but another from the United States would ultimately come to its rescue. The security would not consist in the size of the national force bearing the brunt of the onset, but in the overwhelming and inevitable effect of ultimate action by the League.

The project of a separate international force, besides being unsuited for its purpose and impracticable if designed to supersede national armaments and to suppress diversities of national traditions, training, and equipment, is also the outcome of an unenlightened and materialistic conception of a League of Nations. Its strength will not consist in the amount of force embodied in an international fleet or army, but in the depth of the common resolve of nations to place their national resources at disposal for a common purpose. The armies which have won this war have not been levied by international authority; they would have been less freely given had they been commandeered by other than national governments; and if the League of Nations can count on a common will and inspiration, it will have no need of so materialistic a symbol of its power as a specific international force. On the other hand no international force, however great or however uniformly trained, will guarantee effective international action in the absence of a common mind and purpose among the members of the League. Without a common impulse the League will in any case be powerless. If there is a common impulse behind the national armies, it will produce the requisite unity of direction and, it may be, of command; and the existence of national

forces will give the power of the League an elasticity, a ubiquity, and an effectiveness which a standing international force, stereotyped to plan and located in a particular home, can never guarantee.

Nor need we regret the abandonment of this design on the ground that it alone held out the prospect of national disarmament. National disarmament is clearly an impossibility so long as particular nations are charged with the responsibility for maintaining peace and order in India, Madagascar, the Philippines, diverse African dominions, and liberated fragments of the Turkish Empire. Disarmament can only come in the partial sense of lack of competitive preparations on the part of States to combat one another; and it will come, if there is any substance in our League, partly because preparation for war will prejudice the arming State in the eyes of the world, and partly because reasonable security being obtainable by other means, it will require a great deal more persuasion than in the past to reconcile the nations themselves to the burden of conscription and the cost of armaments. Fear, or at least the plausibility with which militarism could play upon fear, was ever the cause of armaments, and in this country we have never sufficiently grasped the hold which the Slav peril gave the militarist over the German popular mind. But with fear, or at least its plausibility, gone, the occupation of the militarist and the yellow press will largely disappear, and the impulse to avoid the burden of armament and the suspicion of the world will grow more powerful.

The advocates of a specific international army have little to say, as a rule, about an international fleet, and

the course of the war, due to the strength of the British Navy, fortunately gave no occasion for raising the question of a naval battle or campaign under a single commander-in-chief. But if an international army is a point upon which our friends in France are keenly susceptible, we have our own tender spot in the Freedom of the Sea. I need not repeat here what I have written elsewhere [1] and years ago about the preposterous German interpretation of that elastic phrase. That was an expression of impudent militarism which has walked the plank with its piratical parents. But we need not delude ourselves with the idea that our claim to naval supremacy is a sufficient rebutter at the bar of the world's opinion to a similar German plea ; and we are much more concerned with the interpretations which President Wilson has put forward as representing the United States. For our relations with the United States are the most crucial of all the possible factors in a League of Nations. There will be no League if we two Powers disagree. Neither, it may be remarked incidentally, will there be, in the case of a fundamental disagreement on this point, that alternative security which we have enjoyed in the past through our naval preponderance. For a hundred million Americans, with a vast new mercantile fleet, will not be content in case of divergence to take the British *ipse dixit* lying down, or to depend for the safety of their seaborne trade upon our word and our protection, however conscious we may be of our own benevolence and our immaculate rectitude. American opinion is unanimous

[1] *The Commonwealth at War*, pp. 62–74, reprinted from *The Times* Literary Supplement, November 18, 1915.

that America's Navy must grow in proportion to its shipping ; and the view has recently been expressed in the Senate that in policing the seas the American naval force should equal the British. Nor will any one familiar with naval history be under any delusion about the attitude of the rest of the world in any dispute like that which provoked the Armed Neutrality of 1780. A two-power standard, or for that matter a four- or five-power standard would be inadequate to secure us in a conflict with the United States over some of our implications in the ' Freedom of the Seas ' ; and of all the injudicious utterances of ministers in this war none was more foolish than a recent remark that we must ' fight ' President Wilson on this issue.

Not much wiser was the contention of an irresponsible speaker at an equally irresponsible public meeting, that while no one knew what was meant by the ' Freedom of the Seas ' the doctrine was ' damnable '. President Wilson has not, indeed, always been as lucid on this as on other questions,[1] but there is no excuse for failing to understand his final attitude, adopted in his address to Congress on January 8, 1918. His position is contingent upon the establishment of a League of Nations, and if we are sincere in our professions there is nothing to disturb us in his doctrine. But he clearly intends to use the American attitude as a forcible argument for a League of Nations. His view is that the claim to capture private property at sea and to define as we like the nature of contraband is so extreme an assertion of the rights of might that it ought not to

[1] See *The Commonwealth of War*, pp. 202–3 ; J. B. Scott, *President Wilson's Foreign Policy*, 1918, pp. 251–4, 359.

be left to the discretion of a single Power to be exercised in its sole interest. It should not, indeed, be abolished, but be reserved for the benefit of the community, that is to say to a Power or Powers taking action on international authority for the enforcement of international contracts. Nothing in this doctrine would have weakened our position or hampered our action in this war, for we entered it in defence of an international contract guaranteeing the neutrality of Belgium. Indeed, President Wilson's idea, if it had been in force in 1914, would have vastly strengthened our position and eliminated the occasion for the notes he addressed to our government earlier in the war. For the United States and other Powers then neutral would *ex hypothesi* have been committed to supporting us in our defence of the international contract, and there would have been few, if any, neutrals to attempt to trade with Germany. The international boycott, contemplated by the President, for the enforcement of international contracts would have rendered our action far more effective and relieved it of anxiety on the score of neutral susceptibilities.

So far, then, as wars waged for an international purpose are concerned, we lose nothing and gain much by the President's interpretation of the 'Freedom of the Seas'. But for what other purposes do we intend to wage war in the future? We need to be very circumspect before we insist upon unrestricted belligerent rights on the sea in order to fight more securely private wars for our own individual ends. For how in the future will such wars arise? Even in the days of the old Hague Tribunal it was pretty certain that we or

the Power with which a dispute was pending would, before war was declared, appeal to arbitration ; and it is certain that such will be the case hereafter. What, then, will happen ? If we agree to arbitration and accept the award, there will either be no war, or there will be a war in which we shall have international authority, carrying with it the fullest belligerent rights at sea, on our side. Once more we should gain and not lose by the change. And are we, after all our professions and our sacrifices in this war, going in future to refuse to submit to arbitration ourselves or to accept its award ? Is it our contention that we alone are to be exempt from a common obligation to arbitrate, and that there must in future be no private wars but ours ? If that is at the back of our minds, if it is for that contingency that we wish to reserve our privilege of the sea, if we think we can retain our naval supremacy not in order to serve mankind but to defy a League of Nations, we are but Prussians under a thin disguise, and we shall as infallibly meet with, as we shall assuredly deserve, the fate in which they have been involved by a similar lawless ambition. If this is not, and of course it is not, our case, our alarm at the freedom of the seas is merely a nightmare produced by unwillingness or inability to digest the facts at our disposal.

There is the third hypothesis that a League of Nations may not be formed after all. In that case we are entitled to say, as we have said in the past, that our national and imperial security requires the fullest freedom for sea-power and naval belligerent rights ; and I take it that neither President Wilson nor any other of our Allies would press the point against us.

But here, I think, comes the acid test which we have to face. Do we or do we not mean to stand by a League of Nations and put our whole heart and soul into the labour of bringing it to pass? In spite of our lip-service to a League of Nations, the assumption which underlies all the objections to the freedom of the seas is that there will be no League, or only an empty shadow, and that the old international anarchy will go on as before; and it is to test the strength of this assumption that President Wilson presses his argument. His whole policy has been directed towards the elimination of all wars if possible; and if not, towards the elimination of all save wars waged by international sanction for the enforcement of international contracts. And the inducement he holds out to us is this: if we agree, and we say we do, we shall have all and more than all the advantages we have enjoyed in the past, whenever we are in future involved in war. If we do not, but stand aloof from the League of Nations, we cannot expect in the future the acquiescence of the rest of the world in the exercise of the extreme and exceptional rights of naval belligerency which we claimed before there were any means of adjudicating upon the justice of the cause in which they were used.

It is a question whether we are going to play the game. We cannot insist upon others placing all their cards on the table while we keep the ace of trumps up our sleeve. We cannot require that others should disarm and rely upon scraps of paper and international justice, while we reserve for ourselves the further security of an invincible might and an exceptional privilege of the sea. Sea-power has been our great,

our inestimable contribution to the victory of right. Are we content that it should be inviolably consecrated to similar purposes for the future, or do we make the mental reservation that it is to be retained in our hands for our purposes, whether or no they coincide with the judgement of mankind ? Perhaps we cannot answer that question offhand. We shall certainly want to know what the purposes of mankind will be, as expressed in a League of Nations ; whatever individuals may be expected to do, we cannot as a people sign blank cheques ; and we cannot pledge our naval power to a League of Nations until we know what that League will be, or for what ends and to what extent the draft will be made on our credit.

III

The Lesson of History

So far we have been following two lines of argument which appear to lead in opposite directions. Firstly, it has been suggested that the underlying tendency of human affairs is all towards the unity of the world for better or for worse, for peace or for war, with a strong bias at the moment towards peace. Secondly, it has been argued that most, if not all, the schemes for a League of Nations under discussion are too ambitious, too complex, too doctrinaire to survive the practical difficulties which any attempt to give them effect would encounter. They resemble the history, often written by learned but impractical historians, which challenges Lord Morley's comment on Macaulay, ' that is not the

way in which things happen '.[1] There is enthusiasm enough for the idea of a League of Nations ; but there is also enthusiasm of a more militant type for the idea of nationality, and popular feeling does not run to the difficult task of reconciling the two enthusiasms and finding the practical means of expressing without repressing nationalism in an international organization. National independence cannot be absolute in a League of Nations, and national independence of any sort is incompatible with a super-State comprising an international judicature, legislature, and executive. A federation of any kind is always the most difficult constitution to maintain on its original basis : it is ever tending either towards disruption or towards closer union, and even a looser League of Nations would be subject to the liability of either dissolving altogether or developing a degree of international authority to which we are not prepared to submit.

That is, indeed, the fear at the back of our minds which makes many of us somewhat shy of the whole movement. A League of Nations may be a step in the right direction, but we do not know how far we may have to go ; and distance is more important than direction to most pedestrians out for a walk. Great as is our aversion from war, it will not propel us as far as a super-State. Yet the first of a statesman's duties is to adapt his ends to his ways and means, and not to embark on a voyage which his fuel will not suffice to complete. In politics we cannot travel much farther than the propulsion of public opinion will take us ; and it is extremely doubtful whether there is or can be created

[1] *Recollections*, ii. 133.

much public opinion behind the movement for international institutions involving an undefined sphere of international government. We desire responsible national government for ourselves and for other people, believing that to be the best for the individual nation and for the civilized world at large. But few pretend that there is any real demand for an international government of the world. So far as we desire international judicature, legislation, or administration at all, we do not desire them for themselves, but merely because we assume that they are the only means to the end we have in view. That end is not a super-State, but simple peace. There may be motive-force enough to carry us thither, but not to the more distant goal of international government; and when we want one thing, it is a mistake to commit ourselves to another, especially when we have the means to obtain what we want but not the means to obtain what we do not desire.

The advocacy of the super-State, or of institutions which suggest or involve it, seems to be based on the assumption that only thereby can we achieve peace. But this is mere assumption; and inasmuch as it is responsible for the divergence between our first and second premisses and is at the bottom of our difficulties about the League of Nations, it requires some examination. The driving force is admittedly the horror of war as exemplified in our recent experience, and the fear of its repetition and aggravation; for we have lost all faith in the possibility of civilizing war, and are convinced that there is no remedy short of prevention. From that we jump to the conclusion that the only

means of preventing war consists in the pacific settlement of international disputes. We are thus involved in the attempt to create an international judicature; and an international administration of law being clearly inadequate without an international legislature to make the law and an international executive to give effect to its judgements, we are committed step by step to the task of creating the organs of an international State, hoping somewhat helplessly that it will not conflict with our national loyalties and affections.

But on what grounds do we make the initial assumption that wars can only be avoided by the pacific settlement of disputes? It is not the disputes to which we object, but the horrors of war; and if we can prevent war, we need not be over-troubled about the existence of disputes. It will of course be objected that disputes are the root of wars, and the radical reformer will say that unless we eradicate the roots the wars will infallibly follow. But logic is a fallible test of institutions, and pure reason an inadequate index to human action. Let us test the theory by an historical example. Three centuries ago Europe was torn by apparently endless wars of religion; every war took a religious colour and appeared to spring from religious disputes. To thoughtful men of that day it must have seemed that, if wars of religion could cease, all wars would come to an end; and using our modern logic they would have argued that the only means of ending religious wars was to provide for the settlement of religious disputes. The Wars of Religion ceased, but have we yet provided means for settling religious disputes? If men had waited for an inter-religious tribunal, legislature, and

executive—let alone a super-Church—before stopping their wars of religion, those wars would still be recurrent without any prospect of ending. Religious disputes we have still with us, and they are not without their compensations, provided they do not result in war. What mankind has decided is merely that war is not a suitable method of settling religious disputes, nor indeed a method by which they can be settled at all.

That, too, is all that we need with regard to disputes between nations, not that they should cease to exist or be settled in any particular way, but that war should cease to be the method of their settlement. It does not, indeed, settle them: the things over which nations have fought this year are things over which they have fought for centuries and will continue to fight unless and until war is recognized as being no more effective for settling the disputes of nations than those of religion. Ever since England has been a nation, English armies have fought on Belgian and Flemish soil to determine its lordship, while Germans and French have contested Alsace-Lorraine for a thousand years. A thousand years ago a Bulgar king was engaged in making the Balkans Bulgar from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, the Danube to the Aegean, and Russians were aiming at Constantinople; Poles and Ukrainians were fighting in Galicia; and Germans and Italians in the Venetian plains. To think that this war and the coming Congress of Peace will settle for ever these and other disputes of a thousand years is the vainest delusion that ever ephemeral fancy imposed on historical ignorance. The war will have been but one more

sanguinary episode in the blood-stained annals of mankind unless it has demonstrated the idleness of war as a means of ending disputes which are as persistent as those of religion and as the vitality of nations. Disputes will never be ended so far as human eye can see, and Hague tribunals will sit to eternity before they reach a solution. The only thing we want and the only thing we can have is an international recognition of the fact that war has confessed itself bankrupt and committed suicide as a means of ending disputes that are endless. War has been slain in order that reason may take its place. The national State has not ended disputes between individuals, and even a super-State with all the paraphernalia of international institutions will not end disputes between nations. Nor is their continuance a matter of much moment provided they do not lead to a breach of the peace and the supersession of the force of argument by the argument of force.

Our common object is simply to bar out war, and our American friends have in their 'League to Enforce Peace' chosen a more accurate phrase than our 'League of Nations'. Even though some of us may want to go farther, it is best to go together as far as we can, to start on a common path, and make sure of our first step before we venture upon our second. We need not prejudge the later issues; taking the first step first does not preclude us from taking a second afterwards; and the adoption of the simplest form of international action will be no bar to the further development of co-operation. But elaborate schemes on paper are less satisfactory than methods which develop naturally

with experience. No doubt there will have to be some initial contract between the nations, but they should bind themselves to the minimum of obligation consistent with the successful achievement of their essential aim. That aim is the avoidance of war by the prevention of attack. War can only begin by aggression on some one's part; and no one is likely to attack, or even to adopt an aggressive demeanour, if he is convinced that aggression will bring down upon him the hostility of the world, the certainty of defeat, and the penalties which it involves. The first step towards permanent peace is not therefore the erection of a tribunal or the establishment of a super-State. It is a simple treaty between as many Powers as possible not to make war upon one another without previous recourse to other means, and to resist with all their forces any similar breach of the peace on the part of others. It might be sufficient to limit the obligation to an undertaking to resist aggression pending the attempt to settle the dispute by other means; that is to say, to set up a *moratorium*, for attacks that do not come off at the moment are usually postponed *sine die*.

Possession would thus be secured against attack; but possession is not a proof of right, and if our simple contract stereotyped the *status quo* it would perpetuate much injustice. It would, however, have no such negative effect, and the value of our initial step would consist mainly in what would inevitably follow. Historical students are familiar enough with such phenomena. The Revolution of 1688 did not, for instance, prescribe self-government for England, and there is nothing in the Bill of Rights or any other of its

documents to say that the Crown must rule through ministers responsible to Parliament. Nevertheless, responsible self-government was an inevitable consequence of that Revolution. Examples might be multiplied to indicate that much more than a mere guarantee of possession would follow from the elimination of attacks. But there is one precedent so fruitful in its results and so apt as an illustration of our present case that it deserves particular elucidation. It is, of course, merely an analogy, and nothing can be strictly proved by historical parallels. Nevertheless, a study of the means by which similar difficulties were overcome in the past affords some assistance towards the solution of present problems.

The analogy comes from the somewhat distant past when men were striving to find some alternative to private war as a means of settling claims to property, just as we are to-day seeking another means than war of settling international disputes. I refer to the social circumstances amid which Henry II succeeded to the throne. The civil war of Stephen's reign had produced as many claimants, on an average, to each estate as there now are to Constantinople, to Fiume, or to Lemberg; and then, as now, the only arbitrament recognized by custom was the sword for gentlemen of honour or the ordeal for less military folk. The claimant challenged the possessor to single combat, and the defendant had to fight or forfeit his title; he was never secure except in his preparedness for battle, and, to quote Bernhardi's statement of modern militarist doctrine, 'what was right was determined by the arbitrament of war'. How and in what order of proce-

dure did Henry II deal with the problem? Amateur historians may reply that it was an easy matter for him because he had the machinery of a national State behind him. But in fact there was hardly a national government at all; there was no standing army at the Crown's disposal for the purpose, no police, no public opinion; and the combatants were as much addicted and inured to the arbitrament of the sword as nations are to-day. Henry II had fewer means of dealing with his problem than we have with ours, and hence the value of the precedent he set.

He did not attempt to create a new constitution, but limited himself to practical matters of detail. He provided possessors of land with a new writ out of Chancery, called the writ *de pace habenda*. This, without any inquiry into the merits of the case, placed at their disposal whatever resources the Crown might possess as a protection against a challenge; it simply prohibited aggression. By itself it was as inadequate a means of justice as our proposed *moratorium*, but its value lay in its natural consequences. There were claimants with a good title just as there were possessors with a bad; and they naturally came to Henry with the justice of their case. We can—descending to modern vernacular—imagine the gist of Henry's reply: 'Now you are beginning to talk; you abandon, do you, your argument of might and arbitrament of the sword, and are content to rely on the justice of your claim? In that case we will see what can be done for you.' And he provided a further method of procedure, this time for the claimant. It was to the effect that he might have a writ ordering the election of jurors, sworn

to declare the facts as they knew them, and requiring both the parties to abide by their decision. Thus was substituted the test of evidence as to right for the proof of might in battle, and out of these writs there grew in time our system of trial by jury, the perpetual English example to the world of the triumph of argument over force.

The consequences were incalculable. Applied at first merely to cases of property and possession in land, the method of trial by jury was gradually extended to almost every department of judicature ; and the habit of argument slowly superseded the custom of fighting. Within a century after Henry II's initial reform, hundreds of different writs or forms of process were developed in response to the growing demand for judicial remedy ; and every fresh writ meant a fresh root struck by the growing tree of national judicature and by the king's court at Westminster in the popular soil of English life, and a fresh nerve to link the brain of government with the sense of the community ; and out of that legal expansion there grew our parliamentary system. We became a litigious people, but it was an improvement on a duelling caste ; and the habit of arguing law was extended to politics. We converted our robber-barons into knights of the shire in Parliament, and brought them up to Westminster for their politics because they had long been coming to Westminster for their law. Politics became their practice while pillage remained that of their German colleagues ; and for that among other reasons politics grew into a national industry with us while private war developed into a national industry with the Germans. It would

take too long to describe the process; but it would hardly be an exaggeration to say that out of these simple expedients tried by Henry II there developed our judicial system, our parliamentary habits and organization, our political tradition and methods of thought. The first step seemed a small one, but it was the first step which cost and counted in the history of our constitution.

The precedent is pertinent to our present purpose. Our political system did not grow mainly out of the wisdom of our judges or our legislators, but because war was excluded as a means of settling disputes, and recourse was thus induced to law. There was no compulsory arbitrament: the defendant was not compelled to sue out his writ *de pace habenda*, and the plaintiff was not compelled to sue for a jury. The defendant could fight if he liked, and the plaintiff had always the option of keeping the peace. But he could not fight if the defendant placed himself under the protection of the Crown and accepted the Crown's terms of submission to a jury. The result was an almost automatic sifting of justice. The defendant who had no case but would have to pay for his writ *de pace habenda* would surrender at discretion to the rightful claimant; the claimant who had in his turn to pay for his writ for a jury would not apply unless he thought he had a claim. So, too, we need not be anxious to compel arbitration; we only need our writ *de pace habenda* among nations sanctioned by a League to prevent aggression. We can leave it to the disputants to settle the matter between them by any means short of war, and we need not even provide a court unless they fail to compose

their differences by negotiation or to agree upon their method of arbitration. There are many ways of accommodation, and there is no reason whatever to bind ourselves or others to the irritating uniformity of a single tribunal with a fixed location and a stereotyped procedure. We did not start on our own judicial career by setting up definite courts with reams of rules and regulations, but left our law to grow from case to case, and our judges to make and adopt and interpret it by the wisdom of experience and the changing needs of time.

So, too, the way to make international law which nations will respect is not to draft a code on abstract principles, but to provide for its natural growth by ruling out illegal methods of procedure; and the way to encourage recourse to an international court is to bar access to the arbitrament of war. It was the suppression of private war that developed recourse to the law courts, and not the creation of law courts that suppressed recourse to arms: the writ *de pace habenda* came first, and said nothing about a court, and it was only when peace was assumed and assured that the jury found its vocation. So it will be in the international sphere; and the growth of international law in its turn will foster international politics, just as the growth of the law courts at Westminster expanded into our High Court of Parliament.[1] The exclusion of force means the introduction of argument; the destruction or limitation of the case for armaments builds up the

[1] From the point of view of popular, and indeed academic, understanding of constitutional development, it was a misfortune when the common offspring of the Court at Westminster was divided by separation into the Law Courts in the Strand and the High Court of Parliament in the Palace of Westminster.

case for international right ; and the failure of the pleas of the militarist reinforces the weight of public opinion. The obstacle to political and social reform in every country has ever been the growth of armaments fostered by fear of aggression. That leads not merely to bloated armies and navies, but to the prestige and political domination of the men of war and to the quelling of the still small voice of reason. It leads also to the demand for strategic frontiers with their consequent overriding of racial susceptibilities and inevitable friction between the population of the strategic zones and their rulers. No more serious problem confronts the Congress of Peace. Difficult as it will be in any event to determine racial frontiers, the solution will be fraught with endless friction if they are complicated by strategic considerations and if peace is left to repose on the exploded pretensions of mailed fists and military guarantees. The argument from social reform may be still more briefly and crudely epitomized. If we rely on the old dispensation of force, every penny we have will only be worth three farthings : if we can rely on the new dispensation of reason, every penny we have will be worth three half-pence.

These are large anticipations, and no one with any knowledge of the past or intuition of the present will expect a millennium in the immediate future. It took centuries for Henry II's legal reforms to bear their political fruit ; and although the momentum of history increases with every succeeding age, we have not yet attained the speed that will transport us at once from strife to peace. The ending of wars between nations may merely begin the wars between classes, as the

cessation of wars of religion introduced the era of wars of trade, expansion, and nationality. But we need not postpone the solution of one problem because we have others to face hereafter; and the surest way of solving the one before us is not to force the pace. We cannot bind nations into an international State nor deny to peoples the freedom to fashion their future. If we go so far as to bind them not to attack their neighbours, we must do so on the ground that war and its apprehension is itself destructive of liberty, and that peace is the greater franchise.

Liberty is an ambiguous term; it depends upon distribution, and monopoly in one quarter means servitude in another. German freedom consisted in domination and in hoarding in German hands for German ends the freedom of other peoples. Liberty can only be common if it is rationed among the nations. But while we ration it to the extent of prohibiting warlike interference with others, we must leave it to all to do what else they like with their share. They must be allowed, if they choose, to have their tariff wars, their yellow press, their national idiosyncrasies, and their mutual recriminations, provided they do not break out in war which tends to destroy the nations themselves and all these cherished privileges. Their freedom of trade must be a freedom to buy and to sell as they please and to boycott their customers or their supplies at will. But they must not be allowed to shoot their competitors or their customers, nor even those who refuse to buy; and the prohibition of war will induce a saner view in matters of commerce as it will in other relations.

We should not for a moment exclude other arguments, like those of the economist, the lawyer, and the moralist, from the case for a League of Nations. I write as a student of history and am mainly concerned with the way things happened in the past and may therefore happen in the future ; and the past suggests that, as the foundation of order and civilization in the State was the elimination of private war between individuals, so the exclusion of war between nations must be the basis of order and peace and civilized international conduct. We needed other and more elaborate methods than mere prohibition of war before we developed a real society, and those methods of judicial and parliamentary action grew out of needs which could no longer be met by the barbarous methods of private warfare. So we shall need other methods than a simple defensive contract before we can develop an international society. But society has to grow ; it cannot be manufactured, and the less we attempt to force relationship the happier will be our association. The initial problem of a League of Nations will not, indeed, be one of compelling nations to enter, but of determining whom to admit and fixing the standard of conduct, civilization, and service to be exacted as a qualification for admission. Candidates are already coming forward, and the mere prospect of a League has begun to act as an inducement to good behaviour.

Just as one lesson of history is to start with the simplest possible forms of organization and obligation, so another is to begin with existing machinery and what material we possess ; and the war has placed in our hands a good deal of both. It needs a more authoritative

pen than mine—since I only know of the work of the Versailles Conference through the words of some who have shared in its labours—to describe what has been achieved in the last two years in the way of a co-operation which can be more easily continued for the ends of peace than begun for the purpose of war ; and it is to be hoped that some such account will be forthcoming for the enlightenment of the public in this discussion, and the particular instruction of those who doubt the value or practicability of international action. It would be found that the principle of co-operation and even of rationing such things as labour and material by international organization has been carried to lengths never dreamed of two years ago, that the stiffness and angularities inherent in the initial stages rapidly disappeared with the growth of the habit of working together, and that the chief obstacle in the path of international combination was nothing more serious than the shyness and suspicion that is bred of unfamiliarity.

It may be contended with truth that reserve only broke down under the stress of the war and the impressive need for effective collaboration. But having once broken down it will be the easier to restrain ; and the demands of reconstruction will be hardly less pressing than those of the war. It would be inconceivable folly to leave the rebuilding of devastated lands to the competitive and disjointed efforts of their respective national governments, and to scrap the means that have been developed for co-ordinating and economizing labour and materials by international effort. New States will also have to be set on their feet, and it would

be absurd to leave their upbuilding to their individual, unaided, and inadequate command of the needful resources. Their future and that of the world will be not a little affected by the question whether these initial obligations will be due to the interested patronage and assistance of some powerful neighbour or to the common goodwill of a League of Nations. Possibly the habits of co-operation, formed and expanded among the Allies during the war, will provide the nucleus of a firmer basis for international friendship than any pact or formal convention ; and in any case our reading of history shows that institutions developed by growth out of custom and habit have proved more workable and more fruitful than those that are born of theory and constructed of paper and parchment.

It follows from these considerations that the League would develop out of the existing partnership between the present Allies, formulated in a more or a less elaborate treaty ; but the Congress of Peace will have failed to provide for the future unless other States are brought within the scope of the League. Existing neutrals would no doubt be admitted, and we should not exclude new States formed out of the Habsburg Empire. Poland would certainly find a place, though there might be some qualms about the status of other nationalist units claiming independence of Russia, a country with which our relations and in which our position constitute at the moment a feature in the outlook even more ominous than the friction between Yugo-Slavs and Italians. But popular feeling is most averse from the admission of enemy States and especially Germany. Bulgaria and Turkey are hardly

material factors, and the remnants, if any, of Habsburg Empire are a negligible quantity. But sixty, and possibly eighty, million Germans are on a different footing. On the one side, it is held that we cannot grasp that blood-stained hand, and that, even if we did admit Germany to the League of Nations, she would play in it the same obstructive and disingenuous part that she did at the Hague. On the other, it is contended that her exclusion would leave a powerful nucleus towards which will gravitate all the Powers outside the League, reinforced by those members which would sooner or later discover reasons for discontent. Russia, unless she changes beyond immediate likelihood, would be an early and certain ally of an excluded Germany; smaller neighbours would soon incline towards them; and half the territory and population of Europe—to say nothing of the possible addition of the Chinese Empire—might find itself in open or veiled hostility to the League of Nations. That situation would be little short of a repetition of the recent schism which rent the world in twain; and would bring our hopes to naught.

Possibly both these anticipations are based on inadequate intuition. At any rate, having frequently, since the early days of the war, expressed in print the opinion that it would end with a revolution in Germany—an opinion generally scouted until about a fortnight before the revolution took place—I am encouraged to hazard the conjecture that it will be a matter of comparative indifference to the Germans themselves, and to us, whether or not they are admitted to the League. Whether they are admitted or not, the League will, after the determination of Germany's frontiers, give

them an absolute security from attack, based on scraps of paper and independent of German arms. It is reported from the Grand Fleet that in conversation the German delegates expressed some regret that when the Allies demanded the surrender of a portion of the German Navy they had not asked for the whole, and said, 'Anyway, we have no further use for a fleet.' The story may be true; it certainly expresses a point of view which may well become predominant in the German mind after half a century of militarism and recent experience of its consequences. Protected from attack by a League of Nations, Germany may dispense with armies and navies and concentrate on the problems of peace. We need not indulge in any premature jubilation over that conversion. Released from the monstrous expense of armaments and from the colossal perversion of labour and intellect to preparations for war, the Germans will multiply the skill and energy they have shown in industry and commerce. In all probability their protective system will disappear with the dominance of the classes in whose interest it was constructed; and the revenue will be made up by taxes on the high incomes and capital of those who made the war and profited in its course. Germany's need of materials will lead her to welcome imports from every quarter; and, cheaply supplied therewith, she will undersell protective countries, if not in their markets which may be closed against her, at least in other markets like Russia's which will not. She may even make a higher bid for the carrying trade of the world than before the war, and seek in the remunerative triumphs of commerce and industry compensation for the loss of costly dominion.

If such be her mood, she will not be distressed at exclusion from the League nor trouble it by starting a counter-organization.

Nor will she hesitate to give those guarantees of pacific intention, the refusal of which would alone, in President Wilson's eyes, justify any attempt at an economic boycott; and that weapon, if used at all, might have to be invoked against more recalcitrant Powers. It would be a valuable instrument in the armoury of the League, not merely because it might of itself deter the potential aggressor, but because it provides a means by which smaller States, not prepared or in any position to render much military assistance to the League, might none the less make a contribution to the common purpose entitling them to its membership and protection. This economic sanction would also be reinforced by the refusal to the offender of diplomatic intercourse, telegraphic communication, and that legal protection which alone makes life tolerable to its nationals in other countries; and this combination of disabilities might well be enough to deter aggression, even without the overwhelming military and naval coercion which aggression would provoke.

The supreme value of all these sanctions would be the great probability that the weapons would never have to be used. Prevention rather than punishment is the ideal, and prevention is best achieved by an overwhelming deterrent. The British Navy has had no Trafalgar this war, not because its command of the sea was incomplete, but because it was overwhelming, and the enemy only came out to surrender. So we may hope that the power behind the League of Nations will

be so far beyond the reach of defiance that no one will venture to challenge it by aggression. The aggressor would stand in the relation of criminal to the community without the chance that the individual law-breaker has of evasion ; for a country cannot conceal itself or its identity, take refuge in flight, or even cheat the law by suicide. A nation's responsibility is tangible, unavoidable, and perennial, and it supplies the means, if properly used, of deterring it from war.

That is the substance of our aims, and this is the sum of our argument. The provision of a satisfactory alternative, such as an international tribunal, if it can be enforced, is no doubt the best means of eliminating war. But the mere existence of two or more alternatives side by side does not ensure the adoption of the better. Indeed, bad currency drives out good unless the bad is effectively penalized ; and the war superseded the Hague Tribunal because of the latter's lack of sanction. Without a more effective sanction, all the suggested alternatives are open to grave objection. Moreover, the mainspring of our efforts is not the existence of disputes but the effects of war. If war could be eliminated, it would matter little how those disputes were settled, or indeed whether they were settled at all. A dispute between neighbours only becomes a public nuisance when it leads to a breach of the peace.

Nor is the provision of an alternative essential to the elimination of wars. Wars of religion have ceased without the interposition of a court of religious appeal or an inter-ecclesiastical legislature and executive.

Further, if war could be excluded, international habits and institutions would develop to take its place. Law will only grow in an atmosphere of peace. It was the suppression of private war that fostered recourse to law. Judicature and legislation are the effects and functions of the State; apart from the State which gives them sanction they are deceptive fictions; and an international judicature presupposes an international State, for which public opinion is not prepared.

It would be better to begin with the more elemental factors in the problem, and to consider the possibility of a League of Nations, formed simply for security rather than for the more ambitious ideal of justice. Order came before law, and law before justice; but there was little order, law, or justice so long as it was permissible or practicable for individuals to plead the justice of taking arms to vindicate their honour or vital interests. Real or fancied insecurity is the common parent of armaments and wars, and international security is an indispensable condition of international peace. A simple League of Nations for defence would not, however, provide an immediate means of solving problems which peace will leave unsettled and the future will produce. It would not directly guarantee liberty for subject nationalities nor good government for any State, and it would not provide for the settlement of a single international dispute. The bare prevention of war may thus seem a poor substitute for justice. But some of these evils will be remedied by the terms of peace, and it is war with its horrors that we are most concerned to avert. Its elimination would

destroy the mainspring of armaments, weaken if not exterminate militarism, and strengthen the force of public opinion against oppression and injustice. The method would be slower but probably surer than more ambitious schemes ; and, powerful as is the movement of the world towards unity and democratic principles, any attempt to force the pace will precipitate reaction. The simplest form of a League of Nations will require from all of us a self-restraint and sacrifice of nationalistic pride which will tax our moral qualities to the utmost it is prudent to demand.

For ourselves, we come out of the war in a position second to none we have held in the past, and to none that is filled by another to-day. Literally, we are placed on Mount Zion, and figuratively we are not less exalted. But if we are set on Mount Zion, it is only to give such light as we can to the world ; and from him to whom much is given, much is also required. Let those who choose to do so, if there are such, glory in victory over the foe and in power because it is theirs ; but victory and power are not enough in themselves. It is for us to value them only for the extent to which we can use them for the common weal; and we shall abuse our victory and our power unless we make as great an offering to the cause of permanent peace as we have made to win the war. We shall also be false to the dearest wishes of the dead, of those children of ours of the English-speaking race, who entered this war in their millions and laid down their lives in their hundreds of thousands, not to crush a rival, not even in self-

defence, nor merely to save little nations from a peril of to-day; but in order that war might be no more, and in the trust that they who went forth to fight might further go down to fame as a breed of men who ventured to death and torture that they might leave an everlasting peace to all mankind.

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